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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2016

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/71/484/Add.3)*]

71/202. Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming that all States have an obligation to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and to fulfil the obligations that they have undertaken under the various international instruments,

Recalling all previous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including Assembly resolution 70/172 of 17 December 2015 and Council resolution 31/18 of 23 March 2016,[1] and mindful of the need for the international community to strengthen its coordinated efforts aimed at achieving the implementation of those resolutions,

Deeply concerned at the grave human rights situation, the pervasive culture of impunity and the lack of accountability for human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

Stressing the importance of following up on the recommendations contained in the report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,[2] and expressing grave concern at the detailed findings contained therein,

Welcoming the decision of the Security Council to add the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the list of issues of which the Council is seized and the holding of an open meeting of the Council on 10 December 2015, subsequent to the one held in 2014, during which the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was discussed,

Recalling the responsibility of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to protect its population from crimes against humanity, and recalling also that the commission of inquiry urged the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/71/53), chap. IV, sect. A.

[2] A/HRC/25/63.

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Korea to prevent and suppress crimes against humanity and to ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and brought to justice,

Taking note of the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,[3] regretting that he still has not been allowed to visit the country and that he has received no cooperation from the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and taking note also of the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea submitted in accordance with resolution 70/172,[4]

Mindful that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[5] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[5] the Convention on the Rights of the Child[6] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[7] and recalling the concluding observations of the treaty bodies under the four treaties and the importance of giving them consideration,

Noting the submission, in April 2016, by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its combined second, third and fourth periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and of its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

Noting with appreciation the signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[8] and the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography[9] by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, encouraging the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to expedite the passage and enforcement of implementing legislation and the ratification of the Convention, and urging it to fully respect the rights of persons with disabilities and children,

Acknowledging the participation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the second universal periodic review process, noting the acceptance by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of 113 out of the 268 recommendations contained in the outcome of the review[10] and its stated commitment to implement them and look into the possibility of implementing a further 58 recommendations, and emphasizing the importance of the implementation of the recommendations in order to address the grave human rights violations in the country,

Noting with appreciation the collaboration established between the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization in order to improve the health situation in the country, and the collaboration established with the United Nations

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[3] A/71/402.

[4] A/71/439.

[5] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[6] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

[7] Ibid., vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[8] Ibid., vol. 2515, No. 44910.

[9] Ibid., vol. 2171, No. 27531.

[10] A/HRC/27/10.

Children's Fund to improve the nutritional status of children and the quality of children's education,

Noting the activities undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme, on a modest scale, in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and encouraging the engagement of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the international community to ensure that the programmes benefit the persons in need of assistance,

Noting also the cooperation between the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on food security assessments, underscoring the importance of those assessments in analysing changes in the national, household and individual food security and nutritional situation and thereby in supporting donor confidence in the targeting of aid programmes, noting further the letter of understanding signed by the Government and the World Food Programme and the importance of further improvements in operating conditions, bringing access and monitoring arrangements closer to international standards for all United Nations entities, and noting with appreciation the work of international aid operators,

Taking note of the United Nations report entitled "Democratic People's Republic of Korea 2016: needs and priorities" and its call to address the critical humanitarian needs in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

Expressing grave concern about the impact of diverting resources to advance nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles programmes on the humanitarian and human rights situation of the citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

Noting the importance of the immediate return of all international abductees, expressing grave concern at the lack of positive action by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since the investigations on all the Japanese nationals commenced on the basis of the government-level consultations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan in May 2014, and expecting the resolution of all issues related to the Japanese nationals, in particular the return of all abductees, to be achieved at the earliest possible date,

Welcoming and further encouraging the efforts of Member States to raise international awareness about the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

Noting the importance of dialogue for the improvement of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the country,

Underlining the efforts of the Secretary-General to contribute to improving inter-Korean relations and promoting reconciliation and stability on the Korean Peninsula and the well-being of the Korean people,

Welcoming the resumption of the reunions of separated families across the border in October 2015, and, given that this is an urgent humanitarian concern of the entire Korean people, owing, in particular, to the advanced age of many members of the separated families, hoping that necessary arrangements for confirming the fate of family members, exchanging letters, visiting their hometowns and holding further reunions on a larger scale and a regular basis will be made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea and members of the Korean diaspora,

1. *Condemns* the long-standing and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including those which the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, established by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 22/13 of 21 March 2013,[11] has said may amount to crimes against humanity, and the continuing impunity for such violations;

2. *Expresses its very serious concern* at:

(*a*) The persistence of continuing reports of violations of human rights, including the detailed findings made by the commission of inquiry in its report,[2] such as:

(i) Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including inhuman conditions of detention; rape; public executions; extrajudicial and arbitrary detention; the absence of due process and the rule of law, including fair trial guarantees and an independent judiciary; extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions; the imposition of the death penalty for political and religious reasons; collective punishments extending up to three generations; and the extensive use of forced labour;

(ii) The existence of an extensive system of political prison camps, where a vast number of persons are deprived of their liberty and subjected to deplorable conditions, including forced labour, and where alarming violations of human rights are perpetrated;

(iii) The forcible transfer of populations and the limitations imposed on every person who wishes to move freely within the country and travel abroad, including the punishment of those who leave or try to leave the country without permission, or their families, as well as punishment of persons who are returned;

(iv) The situation of refugees and asylum seekers expelled or returned to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and sanctions imposed on citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who have been repatriated from abroad, leading to punishments of internment, torture, other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, sexual violence or the death penalty, and in this regard strongly urges all States to respect the fundamental principle of non-refoulement, to treat those who seek refuge humanely and to ensure unhindered access to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and his Office, with a view to protecting the human rights of those who seek refuge, and once again urges States parties to comply with their obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[12] and the 1967 Protocol thereto[13] in relation to refugees from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who are covered by those instruments;

(v) All-pervasive and severe restrictions, both online and offline, on the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion or belief, opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association, the right to privacy and equal access to information, by such means as the unlawful and arbitrary surveillance,

[11] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/68/53), chap. IV, sect. A.

[12] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[13] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

persecution, torture, imprisonment and, in some instances, summary executions of individuals exercising their freedom of opinion and expression, religion or belief, and their families, and the right of everyone to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, of his or her country;

(vi) Violations of economic, social and cultural rights, which have led to severe hunger, malnutrition, widespread health problems and other hardship for the population in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in particular for women, children, persons with disabilities and the elderly;

(vii) Violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, in particular the creation of internal conditions that force women to leave the country and make them extremely vulnerable to trafficking in persons for the purpose of prostitution, domestic servitude or forced marriage and the subjection of women to gender-based discrimination, including in the political and social spheres, forced abortions and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence;

(viii) Violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of children, in particular the continued lack of access to basic economic, social and cultural rights for many children, and in this regard notes the particularly vulnerable situation faced by, inter alia, returned or repatriated children, street children, children with disabilities, children whose parents are detained, children living in detention or in institutions and children in conflict with the law;

(ix) Violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities, especially violations involving the use of collective camps and coercive measures that target the rights of persons with disabilities to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and allegations of the possible use of persons with disabilities in medical testing, forced relocation to rural areas and separation of children with disabilities from their parents;

(x) Violations of workers' rights, including the right to freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the right to strike as defined by the obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[5] and the prohibition of the economic exploitation of children and of any harmful or hazardous work of children as defined by the obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea under the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[6] as well as the exploitation of workers sent abroad from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to work under conditions that reportedly amount to forced labour;

(xi) Discrimination based on the *songbun* system, which classifies people on the basis of State-assigned social class and birth, and also includes consideration of political opinions and religion;

(*b*) The continued refusal of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to extend an invitation to the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or to extend cooperation to the Special Rapporteur and other United Nations special procedures in accordance with their terms of reference, as well as to other United Nations human rights mechanisms;

(*c*) The continued lack of acknowledgement by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the grave human rights situation in the country and its consequential lack of action to implement the recommendations contained in the outcome of its first universal periodic review [14] and to give consideration to the concluding observations of the treaty bodies;

3. *Underscores its very serious concern* at the systematic abduction, denial of repatriation and subsequent enforced disappearance of persons, including those from other countries, on a large scale and as a matter of State policy, and in this regard strongly calls upon the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea urgently to resolve these issues of international concern, in a transparent manner, including by ensuring the immediate return of abductees;

4. *Expresses its very deep concern* at the precarious humanitarian situation in the country, which could rapidly deteriorate owing to limited resilience to natural disasters and to government policies causing limitations in the availability of and access to adequate food, compounded by structural weaknesses in agricultural production resulting in significant shortages of diversified food and the State restrictions on the cultivation of and trade in foodstuffs, as well as the prevalence of chronic and acute malnutrition, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, pregnant and lactating women, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and political prisoners, and urges the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in this regard, to take preventive and remedial action, cooperating where necessary with international donor agencies and in accordance with international standards for monitoring humanitarian assistance;

5. *Welcomes* the appointment of the new Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, commends the activities undertaken by the former Special Rapporteur, despite the denial of access to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and in this regard welcomes the final report submitted to the Human Rights Council by the former Special Rapporteur, pursuant to Council resolution 28/22 of 27 March 2015,[15] in which he called upon the international community to take steps to promote accountability;[16]

6. *Reiterates its appreciation* for the work of the commission of inquiry, recognizes the continuing importance of its report, and regrets that the commission received no cooperation from the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including with regard to access to the country;

7. *Acknowledges* the commission's finding that the body of testimony gathered and the information received provide reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, pursuant to policies established at the highest level of the State for decades and by institutions under the effective control of its leadership;

8. *Expresses its concern* at the failure of the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to prosecute those responsible for human rights violations, including violations which the commission of inquiry has said may amount to crimes against humanity, and encourages the international community to cooperate with accountability efforts and to ensure that such crimes do not remain unpunished;

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[14] A/HRC/13/13.

[15] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/70/53), chap. III, sect. A.

[16] A/HRC/31/70 and Corr.1.

9. *Encourages* the Security Council to continue its consideration of the relevant conclusions and recommendations of the commission of inquiry and take appropriate action to ensure accountability, including through consideration of referral of the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the International Criminal Court and consideration of the further development of sanctions in order to target effectively those who appear to be most responsible for human rights violations that the commission has said may constitute crimes against humanity;

10. *Also encourages* the Security Council to continue to discuss the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the country's human rights record, in the light of the serious concerns expressed in the present resolution, and looks forward to its continued and more active engagement on this matter;

11. *Encourages* the continuing endeavours of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights field-based structure in Seoul, and welcomes its regular reporting to the Human Rights Council;

12. *Calls upon* Member States to undertake to ensure that the field-based structure of the Office of the High Commissioner can function with independence, has sufficient resources and support to fulfil its mandate, enjoys full cooperation with relevant Member States and is not subjected to any reprisals or threats;

13. *Welcomes* the establishment of the group of independent experts on accountability for human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as set out by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 31/18;[1]

14. *Strongly urges* the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect fully all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, in this regard:

(*a*) To immediately put an end to the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights emphasized above, inter alia, by implementing fully the measures set out in the above-mentioned resolutions of the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council, and the recommendations addressed to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by the Council in the context of the universal periodic review and by the commission of inquiry, the United Nations special procedures and treaty bodies;

(*b*) To immediately close the political prison camps and to release all political prisoners unconditionally and without any delay;

(*c*) To protect its inhabitants, address the issue of impunity and ensure that those responsible for crimes involving violations of human rights are brought to justice before an independent judiciary;

(*d*) To tackle the root causes leading to refugee outflows and prosecute those who exploit refugees through migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and extortion, while not criminalizing the victims of trafficking;

(*e*) To ensure that citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who are expelled or returned to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are able to return in safety and dignity, are treated humanely and are not subjected to any kind of punishment, and to provide information on their status and treatment;

(*f*) To extend its full cooperation to the Special Rapporteur, including by granting him full, free and unimpeded access to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and to other special procedures of the Human Rights Council as well as to other United Nations human rights mechanisms so that a full needs assessment of the human rights situation may be made;

(*g*) To engage in technical cooperation activities in the field of human rights with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and his Office, as pursued by the High Commissioner in recent years, with a view to improving the situation of human rights in the country;

(*h*) To implement the accepted recommendations stemming from the universal periodic review and to consider positively those recommendations which are still under consideration, as well as the preparation of a midterm implementation report;

(*i*) To become a member of the International Labour Organization, to enact legislation and adopt practices to comply with international labour standards and to consider ratifying all the relevant conventions;

(*j*) To continue and reinforce its cooperation with United Nations humanitarian agencies;

(*k*) To ensure full, safe and unhindered access to humanitarian aid, as well as to critical data, and take measures to allow humanitarian agencies to secure the impartial delivery of such aid to all parts of the country, including detention facilities, on the basis of need in accordance with humanitarian principles, as it pledged to do, to ensure access to adequate food and implement more effective food security and nutrition policies, including through sustainable agriculture, sound food production and distribution measures and the allocation of more funds to the food sector, and to ensure adequate monitoring of humanitarian assistance;

(*l*) To further improve cooperation with the United Nations country team and development agencies so that they can directly contribute to improving the living conditions of the civilian population, including progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(*m*) To consider ratifying and acceding to the remaining international human rights treaties, which would enable a dialogue with the human rights treaty bodies, to resume reporting to monitoring bodies on treaties to which it is a party, to participate meaningfully in treaty body reviews, and to give consideration to the concluding observations of such bodies in order to improve the human rights situation in the country;

15. *Urges* the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to implement the recommendations of the commission of inquiry without delay;

16. *Encourages* all Member States, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Office of the High Commissioner, the United Nations Secretariat, relevant specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and forums, civil society organizations, foundations and engaged business enterprises and other stakeholders towards which the commission of inquiry has directed recommendations to implement or take forward those recommendations;

17. *Encourages* the United Nations system as a whole to continue to address the grave human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a coordinated and unified manner;

18. *Encourages* the relevant United Nations programmes, funds, specialized agencies and other related organizations to assist the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the implementation of recommendations stemming from the universal periodic review and from the report of the commission of inquiry;

19. *Calls upon* the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to continue to engage constructively with international interlocutors with a view to promoting concrete improvements in the human rights situation on the ground, including through human rights dialogues, official visits to the country that include adequate access to fully assess human rights conditions, cooperation initiatives and more people-to-people contact as a matter of priority;

20. *Decides* to continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at its seventy-second session, and to this end requests the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and requests the Special Rapporteur to continue to report his findings and recommendations, as well as to report on the follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry.

65th plenary meeting
19 December 2016